

Message Text

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ACTION AID-05

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R 211410Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7225

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

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FOR AFR/ESA AND AF/S

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THIS MESSAGE REPORTS ON RECENT CONVERSATIONS (WITH CYRIL ROGERS AND VISITING ODM REPS) SUBJECT OF UBLS AND PROVIDES OSARAC COMMENTS ON REF A. REGRET OVERSIGHT IN NOT REPEATING REFS C AND D TO LONDON.

A. BRIEF MEETING WITH CYRIL ROGERS ON 1 NOVEMBER

1. VICE-CHANCELLOR MADE HURRIED, UNANNOUNCED CALL ON RDO ON 1 NOVEMBER TO BID FAREWELL PRIOR TO DEPARTURE ON HIS ANNUAL TRIP TO DONOR COUNTRIES. INDICATED HE FIRST GOING TO CANBERRA TO ATTEMPT BREAK LOOSE COMMITMENT MADE THERE ON HIS LAST TRIP. DID NOT PROVIDE FULL ITINERARY BUT INDICATED HE DID NOT PLAN AT THIS TIME TO CALL IN WASHINGTON.

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2. WHEN QUERIED RE CURRENT STATUS UBLS AND

DEVOLUTION ISSUE ROGERS INDICATED HE FELT EVERYTHING IN GOOD SHAPE AND ON TRACK WITH NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS REMAINING. HE INDICATED THAT NOW THAT BLS GOVERNMENTS HAD EXHAUSTED THEMSELVES OVER DEVOLUTION REPORT, WHICH HE NOTED (FOR FIRST TIME TO OUR KNOWLEDGE) THAT HE HAD NOT FAVORED, GOVERNMENTS AND COUNCIL WERE ACCEPTING HIS PROPOSED SOLUTIONS. THESE WERE EXPRESSED AS TRIPLICATION OF HUMANITIES, DEVOLUTION OF SCIENCE FACULTY ALONG LINES INDICATED REF C, AND PROBABLY FURTHER DIVISION ALONG SUBJECT AREAS OF FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE (FESS) FOLLOWING EARLIER DECISION AT MINISTERS' MEETING TO PROVIDE INSTRUCTION IN COMMERCE THROUGH DEGREE LEVEL IN SWAZIALND. HE NOTED THIS NOT REALLY TRIPLICATION EVEN IN HUMANITIES SINCE, FOR EXAMPLE, IF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE WERE TAUGHT AS SUGGESTED IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE AT ONLY ONE CAMPUS AND PHILOSOPHY WOULD PROBABLY REMAIN AT ROMAX ONLY.

3. WHEN RDO ASKED IF THESE PROPOSED DECISIONS CONSIDERED ON BASIS IMPLICATIONS FOR CAPITAL AND RECURRENT COSTS, THE VICE-CHANCELLOR INDICATED THAT SUCH INFORMATION NOT YET DEVELOPED BUT THAT IT WOULD BE FOLLOWING DECISIONS AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING. WHEN ASKED IF NOT MORE RATIONAL TO BASE SUCH DECISIONS ON PRIOR ASSESSMENT OF COST IMPLICATIONS, HE INDICATED SUCH AN APPROACH NOT POSSIBLE AT PRESENT AND WOULD ONLY LEAD TO IMPASSE AGAIN SINCE IT WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERING DEVOLUTION DECISIONS AS A COMPLETE PACKAGE. HE INDICATED THAT ONLY WAY TO OBTAIN COUNCIL AND GOVERNMENT DECISIONS NOW WAS ON PIECEMEAL BASIS WITHOUT IDENTIFICATION OF FULL FUTURE IMPLICATION OF EACH AD HOC DECISION. RDO INDICATED HE THOUGHT THISMIGHT CREATE PROBLEM WHEN DONORS AND GOVERNMENTS BEGAN REVIEWING UBLS REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE AND COMPARED COSTS OF OTHER POSSIBLE PATTERNS OF DEVOLUTION. VC INDICATED HE DID NOT CONSIDER THIS SERIOUS PROBLEM. WE NOT CERTAIN EXTENT OF AGREEMENT IN BLS GOVERNMENT CIRCLES ON VC'S DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS.

B. MEETING WITH DAWES AND FOSTER OF ODM

1. ON WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER, RDO AND PROGRAM OFFICER HAD MEETING WITH VISITING TEAM OF ODM OFFICERS AND 1ST SECRETARY BHC WHO RESPONSIBLE FOR BRITISH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSISTANCE. LESLIE DAWES, AS BEFORE, WAS FAIRLY OPEN AND FORTHRIGHT PARTICULARLY BY ODM STANDARDS. HE AND FOSTER HAD ALREADY VISITED MASERU AND ROMASBEFORE COMING TO MBABANE. THEY INDICATED THAT VISIT HAD MADE THEM EVEN MORE CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE OF UBLS THAN BEFORE. THEY BASICALLY AGREED OSARAC ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS BUT INDICATED THAT ODM NOT PREPARED TO TAKE AS FIRM A STAND AS RECOMMENDED BY HERMANS. IN ALL ESSENTIAL POINTS DAWES OUTLINED ODM POSITION IN SAME

TERMS AS INDICATED BY KIRKNESS IN REF A. DAWES ASKED WHAT U.S. POSITION WOULD BE IF UBLS SPLIT UP INTO WHAT AMOUNTED TO THREE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES WITH A CONTINUING OR INCREASING HIGH COST PER STUDENT YEAR. RDO INDICATED THAT OSARAC RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE THAT WE PROVIDE NO FURTHER ASSISTANCE SINCE WE FELT THAT BETTER RETURN COULD BE OBTAINED IN OTHER AREAS OF ASSISTANCE AND WE HAD NO REASON TO ASSUME AID/WASHINGTON WOULD DISAGREE. DAWES INDICATED THAT IN SPITE OF UNWILLINGNESS OF ODM FOR POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL REASONS TO TAKE FIRMER STAND THEY DID NOT WISH TO BE LEFT HOLDING BAG. HE ASKED IF WE AWARE OF CANADIAN POSITION AND WAS TOLD THAT WE WERE NOT.

2. DAWES AND FOSTER REPORTED THAT ATTITUDE IN ROMA AMONG ACADEMICS WAS BUOYANT. THEY (I.E., THE ACADEMICS) WERE PLEASED THAT GOL HAD BLOCKED ACCEPTANCE OF ALTERNATIVE 3 AND EVEN MORE PLEASED WITH SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT TOWARD "MORE BALANCED" PRESENCE UNIVERSITY ON EACH OF THREE CAMPUSES. THEY FELT FUTURE WAS BRIGHT FOR EMPLOYMENT OF EVEN LARGER ACADEMIC STAFF AND APPARENTLY HAD NOT CONSIDERED,

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OR DID NOT CONSIDER IMPORTANT, THE COST IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT DECISIONS. DAWES UNDER IMPRESSION THAT GOL NOT REALLY AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING. MINED OFFICIALS TALKED OF WAITING UNTIL CHORLTON REPORT AVAILABLE BEFORE DECISIONS ON DEVOLUTION MADE WITHOUT APPARENTLY REALIZING THAT SITUATION CALLED FOR EARLIER INTERIM SOLUTIONS OR THAT DEVOLUTION DECISIONS WERE IN FACT

BEING MADE THROUGH SERIES OF PIECEMEAL DECISIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE VALUE OF CHORLTON REPORT QUESTIONABLE. DAWES ALSO CONFIRMED VC'S UNDERSTANDING THAT CHORLTON DID NOT ANTICIPATE MAKING REPORT FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS.

3. IN SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH FOSTER HE INDICATED THAT INFORMAL REPORT FROM UBLS STATISTICIAN WORKING WITH CHORLTON WAS THAT ADDITIONAL COST IN SWAZILAND FOR DECISIONS ALREADY MADE FOR HUMANITIES FACULTY ALONE WOULD BE ESTIMATED RAND 500,000 IN CAPITAL COSTS AND RAND 100,000 IN ANNUAL RECURRENT COSTS. ON BASIS OTHER INFORMAL COMMENT AS WELL AS NORMAL HIGHER COSTS FOR SCIENCE FACILITIES, OSARAC ASSUMES DEVOLUTION OF SCIENCE FACULTY WOULD INVOLVE EVEN GREATER COSTS. THE STATISTICIAN REPORTEDLY DEFENDED HIGH ANNUAL STUDENT COSTS ON GROUNDS THAT UBLS REALLY CARRYING OUT "A" LEVEL TRAINING IN UNIVERSITY FACILITIES WHICH NATURALLY INVOLVED A HIGHER COST FACTOR FOR SUCH TRAINING. THIS APPEARED TO OSARAC TO BE AN IRRELEVANT ARGUMENT AND FOSTER SEEMED APPRECIATE THIS POINT. FOSTER ALSO REPORTED THAT ALTHOUGH ACADEMICS AT KWALASENI ALSO BUOYANT BOTH THEY AND UBLS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADMINISTRATION HAVE EXPRESSED MORE CONCERN OVER COST IMPLICATIONS OF CONTINUING SERIES OF AD HOC DECISIONS. DID NOT HAVE OPPORTUNITY MEET WITH DAWES AND FOSTER AGAIN AFTER THEIR MEETING WITH GOS MINED OFFICIALS BUT DAWES SUGGESTED RDO VISIT ODM OFFICES IN LONDON DURING WEEK OF 9 DECEMBER WHILE ENROUTE FOR HL.

C. REACTION TO ODM POSITION (REF A)

1. OSARAC FINDS NO SURPRISES IN ODM POSITION BUT FEELS SEVERAL POINTS NEED TO BE MADE RELATIVE THERETO. WE BELIEVE TIMING CRITICAL FOR TWO REASONS AND THAT EARLY ACTION CALLED FOR. FIRST, THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING IS PRESUMABLY GOING TO CONSIDER A "WORKING PARTY" PROPOSAL ON DEVOLUTION OF THE SCIENCE FACULTY AND WHATEVER DECISIONS TAKEN THEN MAY PROVE IRREVERSIBLE AND FIRMLY SET FUTURE PATTERN OF UBLS. SECONDLY, WHATEVER DECISION TAKEN MUST BE MADE IN TIME TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT STUDENT/STAFF HOUSING AND STAFF RECRUITMENT PRIOR TO BEGINNING OF NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR IN AUGUST 1975. WOULD AGREE WITH KARKNES THAT IT INAPPROPRIATE TO PROVIDE ARBITRARY TIME LIMIT BUT IT SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO POINT OUT CLEARLY THE FACTORS CALLING FOR EARLY, TIMELY DECISION. ALSO AGREE THAT WE SHOULD AVOID APPEARANCE OF DICTATING SOLUTION. OSARAC WOULD NOT EVEN SUGGEST THAT ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION NECESSARILY APPROXIMATE ALTERNATIVE THREE AS LONG AS CRITERIA SUGGESTED BELOW ARE MET. OSARAC POSITION ON MEETING IN ROMA OR MASERU WOULD BE NOT TO SPECIFICALLY PROPOSE SUCH A MEETING BUT TO SUGGEST WILLINGNESS OF DONORS TO DO SO IF BLS GOVERNMENTS

THOUGHT SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE USEFUL.

2. OSARAC STILL BELIEVES, FOR BENEFIT BLS GOVERNMENTS THEMSELVES, THAT FIRMER POSITION THAN ODM APPARENTLY NOW PREPARED TO TAKE MAY BE IN ORDER. WE BELIEVE COMMUNICATION SHOULD INDICATE DONOR CONCERN THAT DEVOLUTION DECISIONS SHOULD BE BASE ON CRITERIA OF (1) OVERALL COST EFFECTIVENESS, (2) AN EFFICIENT USE OF FACILITIES AND STAFF, AND (3) PROVIDE BASIS FOR A REDUCTION IN THE COST PER STUDENT YEAR. FURTHERMORE SHOULD INDICATE CONCERN AS MUCH OR MORE WITH RECURRENT COST IMPLICATIONS FOR BLS GOVERNMENTS AS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR DONOR SUPPORT COSTS. ASSUMING APPROACH WOULD BE IN FORM WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS FROM EACH DONOR, WE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BELIEVE THEY SHOULD REFLECT COMMON CONCERNS INCLUDING THE RISK OF DIMINISHED DONOR INTEREST AND SUPPORT LEVELS IF REASONABLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS COULD NOT BE FOUND IN TIME AVOID ANOTHER CRISIS AT BEGINNING NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR. THIS SHOULD NOT BE IN FORM OF THREAT BUT IN FORM REALISTIC, AND HOPEFULLY, HELPFUL ASSESSMENT SITUATION WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY GOVERNMENTS AND COUNCIL IN ARRIVING AT FINAL POSITION AND DECISIONS. DECONTROL 31 DECEMBER 1975.
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